Transitioning to Joy
a transgender danganronpa zine

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Transgender Danganronpa Zine

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By the transgender community, for the transgender community, celebrating ourselves in the spotlight and in everyday life from within the Danganronpa fandom.

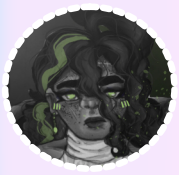
We all hope you enjoy this zine!

Mods

Cosmo
Head/Art

cosmicstvr_
starrycosm0
sterlinglee123

Atti
Merch/Format



mirroredgiraffe
mirroredgiraffe
mirroredgiraffe

PM
Finance

2p42m
2p42m

Iz
Writing

irl.izuru

Ambrose
Social Media

cryptid.alex
cryptidalex
cryptid-alex

Writers

Azure

AzureMist
artsy-azure

Finch

aintapreacher
iwillbeyourgoal

Thimble

thimblelini
thimblelin

Vessel

Glownary

glownary
glownary
glownary

Artists

Cover

Sketch: PM/Atti
Lines: Harper
Color: Atti

Hypnos

Mimir_Mimos
Mimir_Mimos
Mimir_Mimos

Fei

fei.scribbles
fei-scribbles

Liam

Arrozconpan13
arandano-sopa

K

justsomedumbstuff
justsomedumbstuff

Izzy

sonyanami_
kamuizzy

Mars

LookimaGhostArt
lookimaghost

Zayn

izukozzz
izukozz
izukozz

Cyphin

cyphin.png
cyphin_png

Chacha

rokkucha
rokkucha

Roman

komaefag
transalbedo

Casey

ratcastled

Lev

maybenotlev
godhateslev
godhateslev

Lynn

justlynnstore
shadowmatcha
wintermelynn

Kippy

kippyscafe
kippyscafe

Abby

wht.ablum

Marsho

marshoboy
marshoboy

Al

Lunasea.art
Agalnamedlunasea

Housh

mouthwat3r

OFJ

OFJ.art
OFJ_art

Kay

mmmicrowave_
kaysballs

Jesse

deadmaidclub
deadmaidclub
deadmaidclub

Harper

harpoon__gun
harpoon__gun

Unhuman

Azure

When you are presented with only two options for being, and neither appeals to you, sometimes, one doesn't seek out a third option. Instead, one may look for why it is that they are unhappy with the two options presented. Everyone around them has picked one or the other without a problem, after all. But they keep arriving back at this question. From where does this sense of the distortion of the self originate? Why is it that they cannot connect to those around them? Why are they unable to look at their physical form without revulsion?

The idea of having a human form, of any gender, ready to be perceived and judged, disgusts them.

Of course. Of course.

The common denominator is humanity.

——— ⋆·☆·⋆ ———

Gundham Tanaka; otherwise known as the Supreme Overlord of Ice, Tanaka the Forbidden One, et cetera; was cursed with powers from the underworld, due to them being born a child of both Heaven and Hell. They were cursed to be shunned by humanity, cursed with poisoned flesh... But, most of all, cursed with having to be raised amongst the pathetic human race.

For a while, Gundham couldn't be bothered to do anything with their corporeal form. Even if it was what humans would perceive them by, they began to feel less and less of a desire to attempt to make themself appear presentable. What did it matter? They were always just going to look like what they disguised themself as, in the end. Just a 14-year-old human male.

But, recently, they have begun to get up early to give themself time to fuss over their appearance a bit.

They had found ways to spark some sort of joy with their appearance, even if it was always going to resemble that of a male human.

It had begun when they had gone up to scratch their own face one day, and froze when they felt a new texture. From then on, they began to almost obsessively shave their face every morning, whether they needed it or not. That evolved into actual attempts to do something with their hair, which led to now; putting on the baggiest clothes they could manage, painting their nails black (sometimes resorting to Sharpie, if their nail polish couldn't be found), and basically anything else they could manage to find joy in what they saw in the mirror.

Demons are the only ones who can see their own reflections. They are a bit like vampires, in that way... But they all pretend that they can't see their reflection. Each for their own reasons.

Gundham left the bathroom after getting ready, and closed the door behind them.

They noticed a field rabbit on their way to school.

——— ⋆·☆·⋆ ———

It wasn't just their own human form from which Gundham felt a distance from. It was also present with their human peers, as well.

It only made sense, of course. There was no attempt to hide that Gundham was considered extremely odd, even from Gundham themself. Those around Gundham saw through them; they had known Gundham was not of their kind before Gundham had figured it out themself.

They were Other, and, for that reason, those around them constantly searched for reasons to deny them their humanity. Gundham struggled to fit in with their male peers, their female ones shied away on principle of their human form's appearance. And all of Gundham's peers, regardless of gender, told Gundham that they were valued (because who would openly admit to not valuing another human?), but treated them as if they were not. They were not 'human'. Instead, they were 'weird', 'too loud', 'too much'. They didn't look or act like boys were supposed to; or, really, how anyone of any gender was supposed to.

Eventually, this solitude starved the young human boy that Gundham used to be to his death. They buried him in their backyard in secret.

That boy had been just so lonely. You know?

He had been just so, so lonely.

There were ways to die that didn't imply permanence. Gundham was reborn as the demon they were now from that past self. And when they look back at the human that they used to be, they wonder how it was that they kept him alive for so long.

They supposed it didn't matter. Their souls would become one, once they reunited in Gehenna. And Gundham wasn't “too loud” anymore, out of a self-conscious disgust for their continuously deepening voice.

——— ⋆·☆·⋆ ———

Gundham tried to honor the young boy's legacy by avoiding the peers that starved him whenever they could manage. Especially physical education classes. They had always felt awkward in the men's locker room, and, nowadays, felt even more so due to having to change into clothes with fewer layers, less coverage.

Very few humans would give the time of day to a demon. But, of the mortals in their middle school, there were a few who extended their hand, in spite of Gundham’s own poisoned flesh. Of those included the nurse, who Gundham visited every day, when it was time for physical education.

She smiled when she saw Gundham, and they felt as if such an expression was meant for someone else. “Hello, Tanaka!” (Gundham wouldn't have minded if she called them their first name, but never corrected her.) “Is it the usual issue?”

'The usual issue,' of course, being nausea. It was Gundham's go-to excuse to camp in the infirmary. You could disprove many claims to injury, but you couldn't disprove one feeling nauseous. Gundham nodded in response. “Indeed.”

The nurse grinned again; this time, with a knowing sort of slant to it. She seemed to know that Gundham wasn't actually sick every day, at the same time, with the same issue... She just allowed it. Understood it.

This extent of understanding, without any push for more information, was why she was a member of their tribe.

“Well, lay down and I'll get you some water and crackers.”

Ah, that reminded them. They needed to ask to trade some of their mother's own poisonous food for a bit of lettuce at lunch. (Or maybe, they could get lettuce in exchange for not giving a student their mother's food.)

——— ⋆·☆·⋆ ———

Gundham’s last class was their favorite. Especially on days when the animal raising committee wasn't meeting after school, like today. This is because of the tiny, palm-sized demon beast, barely contained by a cage next to the teacher's desk.

Gundham had become so disconnected from their body and their peers that humanity was often an afterthought to them. Instead, they sought out the company of beasts. The animals of this realm; often also outcast or mistreated for being less than human. But, in spite of that, the beasts proved far more trustworthy than humans. Gundham understood these creatures on another level; resonating with each species for one reason or another. Cats, for being expected to behave like dogs, and being hated when they instead act as their own beings. Bears, for their fierce desire to protect those they love. And rodents, perhaps, most of all, for being misjudged by their appearance. Seen as powerless and dismissed due to their small size.

On their way home that day, Gundham sought out the field rabbit that they had seen before. They found it rather quickly, camping out in a small bush near where it had been previously. Upon locking eyes with the beast, it poised to run, and Gundham froze in place, with the exception of reaching into their jacket pocket to pull out the bit of lettuce that they had gotten from their peer.

Once the rabbit's ears had perked forward a bit, showing relaxation, Gundham began to approach, small steps at a time, and holding out the treat. “Good girl,” they muttered, keeping their tone light, watching for changes in body language and freezing whenever it seemed the creature was once again nervous.

After a few moments, Gundham was slowly leaning onto the ground, close enough to hold the lettuce out to the beast if they stretched their arm. It hesitated a moment, but eventually relented, crunching down on the lettuce in Gundham's palms.

Gundham released their breath, their body relaxing. “Good girl,” they repeated, smiling at the small, powerful thing now sharing their presence.

Gundham was prepared for the rabbit to scamper off once the lettuce was eaten and gone, but, once it was, they paused when they realized that it hadn't. Instead, it stayed with them, staring at them. Gundham held up both hands, showing their palms to the creature, in order to show it that they had no treats left.

Instead of leaving once Gundham had nothing more to offer it, the rabbit stuck around with the demon which had earned its trust; approaching Gundham a bit more, then flopping over right in front of them. They tried not to let their reaction show in their body language, for fear of scaring the beast off, but their heart raced. This was a sign of rabbit contentment, and trust above all else.

Gundham held their hand out to check if it was okay, and, seeing no change in the rabbit's body language, began to pet its soft, brown fur.

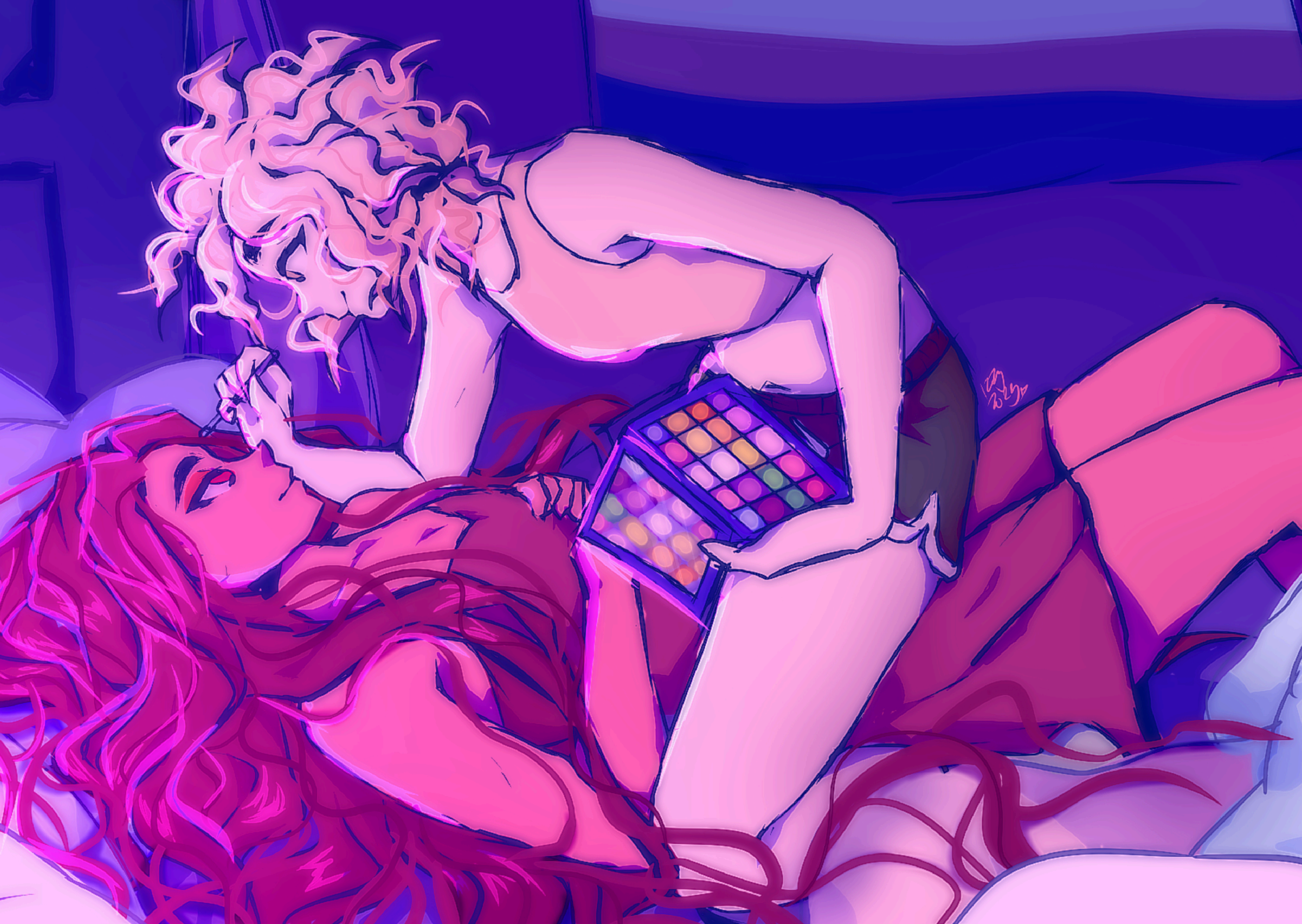
The beasts of this realm were cast out by humanity, like themself. They were trustworthy, they were straightforward, and Gundham felt as if they could understand them much easier than their human peers.

But most of all, these beasts didn't see them as 'weird', 'too loud', 'too much'. They didn't scorn their usage of nail polish or refusal to socialize in the way in which a human male is supposed to.

They don't see them as a human male at all.

The beasts of Earth didn't know, nor care, about the state of one's humanity, nor did they understand what humans saw as 'gender'. They did not expect for anyone to perform any level of 'appropriate' self-expression or pleasantries...

They just saw the beings around them as who they were, and nothing more, so long as the same was extended to them.



Mitosis

Finch

Mukuro nudged the fire he'd made in an upper floor of an abandoned office building with his foot. Some of the desk wood shifted and cracked, the flames growing even higher. Good. They'd be able to survive the night without a fire, anyway, but this would make it more bearable. He hadn't had to build a fire by himself in a few years, but he was glad to see his skills hadn't deteriorated.

The thing about being in a guerilla military group in middle school is this: You get used to people being around. Mukuro didn't have a moment's privacy in Fenrir, and that was fine with him. He had nothing to hide from them. He liked feeling like he was needed, part of something. And then Junko had come to retrieve them, finish what she'd started when they were growing up.

And how could they say no? Not to Junko. Never to Junko.

——— ⋆·☆·⋆ ———

"I mean, Hope's Peak students have Ultimate talents, right?" Mukuro asked, frowning. "What would mine even be?"

"I dunno, the Ultimate Soldier?" Junko examined her nails. "I mean, you did have that whole Fenrir phase. It's not like it would be a lie."

Phase. Fenrir phase. Mukuro felt their heart rate increase slightly, but they tamped it back down.

"Since when do you put any stock in the truth?" Mukuro asked, his face carefully arranged into a mask of disinterest.

"The truth is everything, big sis!" she exclaimed, rolling her eyes. "At a certain point, despair means nothing if it isn't actually real."

Mukuro frowned, but before he could reply, she continued:

"Plus, you've never been good at lying, anyway."

——— ⋆·☆·⋆ ———

He caught a glimpse of himself in a dirty, broken window and took in the musculature of his arms, how the choppy ends of their hair brushed the sharp line of their jawline.

With each day he looked less like her. With each day he clawed closer and closer to what he might finally become, his nails splitting and fingertips bleeding raw with the effort. Soon, hopefully, all there would be left of Junko would be the DNA they shared that no one could see.

——— ⋆·☆·⋆ ———

Sighing, Mukuro rolled the fabric of their skirt in between their fingers. The rough texture aggravated his senses and sent an unpleasant shiver down his spine.

"Did they have to use the cheapest possible fabric to make these uniforms?" they muttered to themself as the Hope's Peak Academy headmaster droned on and welcomed Class 78 to the school.

He didn't mind wearing a skirt, not really, but at least make it comfortable.

"I know, right?" the girl sitting next to Mukuro agreed conspiratorially. She had a gravity-defying ponytail, bright blue eyes and a kind smile.

Mukuro stared at her.

"I bet the boys' uniforms aren't so itchy," she continued on, seemingly unbothered by his silence.

"Mm," they grunted. She turned back toward the headmaster, and Mukuro let out a small sigh of relief.

Until –

"Did I hear Headmaster Kirigiri say you were the Ultimate Soldier?" She'd turned back toward Mukuro. "That's so badass! And you and Junko are twins, like, how cute?"

Mukuro's throat knotted slightly at this. Junko was at the end of the row, leaning back in her chair and appraising the headmaster with what would look to anyone else like a neutral, detached expression.

But Mukuro knew better. She was sizing him up. How easy would he be to take out? Should he be killed or converted?

Sometimes it was like having two brains in Mukuro's head.

"Hey, she's the Ultimate Fashionista, right? Maybe she can get us some better uniforms!"

——— ⋆·☆·⋆ ———

Before he joined Fenrir, Mukuro hadn't expected a world in the midst of large-scale war and ruin to be so *quiet*. People didn't roam the streets if they could help it. They skittered like mice, scared for their lives but unable to do anything to defend them.

Life during the Tragedy was much the same, but this time Mukuro was alone. Another thing he hadn't anticipated: the intensity of silence once you're by yourself. Despite their solitary nature, Mukuro had been surrounded by people for as long as he could remember. Junko and their family, then Fenrir, then Class 78. A constant din around Mukuro, something that didn't ever really bother them.

And now, nobody. He wouldn't have ever said he had 'friends,' but... there were people he didn't mind being around.

——— ⋆·☆·⋆ ———

"Ugh!" Makoto's head dropped to his chest as his fake rifle missed the metal target a few feet away. "That's, like, the fifth time in a row."

The older student who was running the booth shrugged. "Sorry. No prize."

The Hope's Peak carnival was crowded and hot, but it had its advantages, like your classmates trying their best at a silly game and still failing.

Mukuro, who had been watching Makoto with some interest, felt their lips twitch a bit. "I thought you were supposed to be the Ultimate Lucky Student," they said as they approached.

"Right?!" He threw up his hands in defeat. "I mean, I should be good at this kind of thing."

"You're too stiff," Mukuro said automatically, then clamped his mouth shut. "I mean – never mind."

"No, no, I wanna hear it," Makoto said, his pale green eyes shining up at them. "This is actually your talent. I'm sure I can learn lots from you."

Something small and warm fluttered in Mukuro's ribs, but he didn't acknowledge it.

"Here," he said, clearing his throat holding his hand out for the rifle. Makoto offered it eagerly and stepped back as Mukuro took it. It was light, yet clunky – nothing like a real gun. But he supposed that was the point.

Taking aim, they steadied their breath and heart.

One, two, three, four, five rapidfire shots, all hitting their designated targets. He heard Makoto gasp behind him, and that feeling in his chest grew.

"That was so good, Mukuro!" He whirled around to the student attendant. "She gets a prize, right?"

She blinked, nodding.

Mukuro's nose scrunched. "I don't want a prize."

Makoto pouted, "C'mon, Mukuro, you won! Just pick one out!"

He stared at the selection, overwhelmed by choice, until –

"Hey," Makoto said, a little quieter. "Do you want me to pick it out?"

They found themself nodding without thinking about it. Makoto grinned and scanned the toys, brow furrowed in concentration until his eyebrows shot up to his hairline and he pointed firmly.

"That one, please."

The student worker picked up a small stuffed dragon – a black and white one with accents of red, blue and orange.

Makoto took it from her and turned to Mukuro. "Here you go!"

He blinked, taking it silently.

"I thought... I don't know. It reminded me of you?" Makoto said, eyes somewhere on the ground and face darkened. "Like, cool and powerful at the same time."

Cool. Powerful. Mukuro felt like they were going to explode and had no idea why.

"Thank you," he said, voice choked, and he turned on his heel and ran.

He spent the rest of the carnival in the quiet of the dojo, turning the dragon over in his hands.

——— ⋆·☆·⋆ ———

Sometimes at night, when Mukuro was taking shelter in abandoned apartments or under overpasses, they wondered if they had made a huge mistake. Maybe Junko did know best – for Mukuro and for the world. It wasn't like he cared about humanity anyway. He never felt connected like other people seemed to. It's why he agreed to kill everyone in Giboura Junior High; it's why they instigated the murder of the Hope's Peak student council.

They were the Ultimate Soldier, and Junko was their sister.

But that was the thing: It was never just about humanity or other people. It was always about Mukuro and Junko. In the end, that was all there had been, maybe all there ever would be.

——— ⋆·☆·⋆ ———

As the ceiling of his Hope's Peak dorm blurred into focus, Mukuro sat up, scrubbing his eyes with his fists. They'd had a fitful sleep, punctuated by unsettling and nebulous dreams. He didn't feel rested at all, and it didn't help when he crossed to his dresser and unlocked and opened the top drawer.

Junko's "Ultimate Fashionista" outfit lay folded in one corner, next to a plastic bag with a blonde wig and two clips, a contact case, and a cosmetics bag. Their plan was so close to coming to fruition. There was less than a week before Junko planned to kill the headmaster and wipe everyone's memories.

Even a few months ago, Mukuro was thrilled to go along with the plan, to enact Junko's will. She knew best; she always had.

And she still might, honestly – Mukuro couldn't say for certain one way or another anymore. But there had been so many little shifts in Mukuro's way of thinking about themself in the last few years and it was all culminating in this. This outfit staring at him from the offending drawer.

Mukuro wasn't a girl. Hadn't felt like a girl in a long time. Presenting as one was... not ideal, but it wasn't the worst thing in the world. But – presenting as this specific girl. Junko Enoshima. Their sister. There was something about it now that tasted like bile in the back of his throat, that gripped his heart, that clawed and dug under his skin.

He couldn't do it, not again. The last time – the first time – they masqueraded as their sister, it was something of a test. A test of Mukuro's will to enact Junko's perfect scenario as Junko while his sister had no memories. And Mukuro performed, he thought, to the letter.

All the while, though, something niggled at the back of his mind.

"Junko needs me, right? I need Junko and she needs me. The world needs us."

At the time, they'd been content to answer yes and move on. But now his reasoning fell flat, and he felt sick looking at this disguise, this lie. He couldn't perpetuate it anymore, not to himself.

And so, for the first time – maybe ever – Mukuro had his own plan. The school's doors and windows were already bolted shut, but there were plenty of exits via sewers or air ducts.

One of them was even attached to the ceiling in the nearest bathroom, which was where Mukuro would climb out and make their escape. It wasn't foolproof or elegant, but Junko wouldn't be expecting it, which was the key.

He got dressed, quickly and without fanfare, in his Fenrir gear, and stared at the open drawer one more time. They could leave a note for Junko – but what was the point. What would he even say?

He didn't know.

As he tightened his grip around the small duffel bag holding only the barest essentials, he left his dorm room for the last time – and Junko Enoshima for the first.

⋆·☆·⋆

Life on the outside hadn't been easy by any stretch of the imagination. Mukuro still wasn't sure if Junko was looking for him, if she had sent out lackeys to track him down. Maybe in some sick, desperate way, they wanted her to. Everything was strange and frustrating and difficult.

If he were being honest with himself, early in the morning while the thick grimy fog rolled over the streets and the curfew alarms hadn't sounded yet – he didn't know if despair would win the day. They didn't even know if they'd survive, not really. But they were outside the walls that Junko had built for them, finally, and they were standing on their own.

Stomping out the embers of last night's fire with his boot, he figured that's all he could really ask for.

No
No
NO
I GIVE HER THE D
HE GIVES ME THE D
??
HT'HIS
DOL UPDATE

METAL RESISTANCE

First Dance

Thimble

"Look at this one," Chiaki says, pulling out a green, sleeveless, floor-length dress. "I think you'd look good in this one, don'tcha think?"

Sonia smiles sheepishly, glancing at the dress, but only for a moment before turning back to her rack. "It's a lovely dress, Chiaki," she says, her eyes drifting to the floor.

"You should try it on," Chiaki says, pushing the dress into Sonia's hands. Sonia's smile fades a bit as she holds the dress. She looks as if she wanted to say something, but the words don't come out. Chiaki gives her an approving look, urging her to try on the dress.

"I," Sonia began to say, continuing, "I couldn't, really." She pauses, "Oh, well...I, I, no, nevermind."

"Why not? It'll look great on you," Chiaki says, matter-of-factly. "Pretty much everything looks great on you, Sonia."

For a moment, Sonia stands still, contemplating. On one hand, Chiaki does have a point—people always complimented her outfits when she went out—but on the other, there was a layer of doubt in her mind. Maybe Chiaki was just telling her she looked good so she would feel better about herself. Maybe the dress wouldn't frame her body right; maybe she'd look bad. She wouldn't tell her if she looked bad, would she? No, she would worry about hurting her feelings.

"Sonia?" Chiaki says softly, inching closer to her girlfriend. "You know, you really don't have to try it on if you don't want to."

Sonia glances downward, feeling embarrassed at herself. "I do want to," she says, trailing off. "It's just..."

"...hard?"

"Yes."

Sonia lets out a sigh that sounds as if it's been held in for a while. Chiaki glances towards the rack of dresses before turning back to her girlfriend. "Why don't we...try on something together?"

"...Together?" Sonia questions, looking at Chiaki with a confused look on her face.

"I'll pick a dress for you, and you can pick a dress for me," Chiaki says, a wide smile forming on her face. Chiaki quickly turns around, shuffling through the rack faster than she could beat her high score in Tetris. When she finishes flipping through one rack, she moves to the next. Sonia stumbles to catch up, continuing to stand there for a moment before rushing off to find a dress.

She knows Chiaki doesn't like anything too frilly. Despite her insistence that coquette style dresses would look absolutely lovely on her, Chiaki hated the way she felt in them. Sonia, however, loves frilly dresses. To be completely honest, she dabbles in a variety of styles. Sometimes, she even surprises herself with how much she likes what she wears. She loves dressing nicely. She was taught as a child that being well-dressed warranted others' respect. More recently, however, she started dressing nicely, simply, for her own enjoyment. Why did it matter to everyone else how she looked? Only she should get to decide whether she is pretty or not.

That's what she tells herself. But, deep down, there was still a part of herself—the younger Sonia—telling her that if she didn't look pretty by the public's standards, then she can never be a woman. If she really focuses on the idea, it came back sounding silly, but at the same time, it all made sense.

She runs her fingers along the pink dress resting in her hands. It is pink, sparkly and would be utterly too much for Chiaki if it weren't as simple as it was. Despite the dress's flamboyant style, Sonia found it beautiful.

It is a vintage 60s style, sleeveless, swing dress in a shade of pink that was almost fuchsia, almost magenta. Sonia isn't quite sure what color it was exactly, but she found it quite pretty.

"Sonia," Chiaki yells from across several rows of dresses. "I think I found the perfect dress for you."

"Did you?"

"Sonia," Chiaki drags out, rolling her head to the side as she shifts out from between the racks. "You don't understand. It's perfect."

Sonia looks down at the dress in her hands, grabbing it off the rack with vigor. She gathers herself as she begins to walk over to Chiaki. For a moment, she doubts her choice of dress for her girlfriend, but seeing Chiaki's large smile puts her at ease. She wonders whether she's ever seen Chiaki this happy before—she knows she has, internally, but it's a nice thought in the moment.

Chiaki scrambles over to Sonia, holding up a long, mermaid style, teal and white dress. She has stars in her eyes. She's positively glowing as she waves the dress in the air.

"Well," Chiaki urges, "go try it on."

Sonia takes a deep breath, holding Chiaki's dress a little closer to her chest as she does. "You'll try on yours as well, correct?" she inquires softly.

"Of course," she says, taking Sonia's choice into her hand.

Chiaki pauses as she starts to walk to the dressing room, hesitating to leave as she notices Sonia's shaking hands.

"You don't have to be nervous," Chiaki says, resting her hand on Sonia's shoulder.

"I know, it's just," Sonia starts to say. She pauses. "I'm afraid."

"Why are you afraid?" Chiaki asks, switching her tone to a more comforting one, attempting to console her girlfriend.

"I haven't done this since I was," Sonia pauses, scrunching her eyebrows into an embarrassed expression. She looks away. "I haven't done this since I was a little girl...and I'm scared."

It's true. She hadn't done this sort of thing since she had first come out to her parents. They'd taken her dress shopping. They'd been supportive, of course, but...being a part of the Novoselic royal family had its downsides. She'd loved being a princess—she always had—but her people, as much as she loved them, didn't always agree with her choices as a person rather than a royal.

'You're a princess, Sonia. How can you be afraid of something like this?' Her mind fills in the blanks. How could she be afraid of something so silly?

Everyone was afraid of something, she thinks. This was just her fear. She would get over it. But Chiaki notices her stumble before she could, raising her hand to her girlfriend's shoulder in an act of comfort.

"Is everything alright?" she asks, her eyebrows softening.

"Yes," Sonia bites her lip nervously. "Yes, everything is fine. I'll go try on the dress just...give me a minute." Sonia wipes the tears off of her cheeks with her sweater-covered hand. Tear stains linger as she pulls it away.

She drags the dress into the dressing room, settling herself before the mirror. She sets the dress down on the stool in front of her, staring at her reflection as she does. She pushes her bangs out of her face, tucking them behind her ears.

"Sonia," she says to herself, trying to inspire

some confidence within herself. "You are beautiful."

She pauses, hesitating as she picks up the dress. "And you...you are going to look absolutely lovely in this dress."

After a moment of attempting to psych herself up, Sonia begins to slip on the dress. Surprisingly, it is quite difficult to put on. But, by god, is it gorgeous on her. Despite the zipper not being zipped, Sonia can prematurely tell that the dress flatters her form perfectly.

"Chiaki?" Sonia calls through the curtains, sticking her hand out to wave for her girlfriend's assistance. "Would you mind helping me zip this dress? I can't quite seem to reach."

Chiaki swiftly makes her way over to help. She slips the zipper up from outside the curtain, only waiting for another moment before fully pushing the curtain aside to get a good look at Sonia's dress.

"It's beautiful."

"I'm quite glad you think so, it would be a disappointment if you didn't."

Sonia smiles to herself, glancing down at the bodice of her dress. She thinks about twirling around in it, but stops herself before she can start.

"I think you should get it."

"I think I shall."

Sonia shuffles herself back into the dressing room, slipping off the dress just as she does. Soon after, she swiftly sends for Chiaki to retrieve it from her in preparation for payment.

“How are you feeling?”

“Good,” Sonia says, biting her lips. “Well, actually, I’m quite nervous.”

“Don’t be nervous,” Chiaki says, kissing her girlfriend’s cheek. “Everyone will love it.”

Sonia smiles softly, unbuckling herself from Chiaki’s car. In the past, she would have been pulled up in a limousine, but right now, she can’t seem to care about her girlfriend’s state of automobile.

“I love you,” she says, stepping out towards the entrance.

“Ibuki loves Sonia’s dress!” Ibuki says as she spots Sonia walking in. “She thinks she looks very pretty in it!”

“Awh,” Sonia coos, blushing. “Thank you, Ibuki!”

“See?” Chiaki says, leaning into her girlfriend’s shoulder. “I told you everyone would love the dress.”

“That is a relief.”

Chiaki takes Sonia’s hand softly as music begins to play in the background. The music surrounds the two, wrapping them in warm melody. She beckons for a dance, and others follow. Class 77-B has erupted into the first prance of the night.

“Will you take this dance with me?” Chiaki pauses. ”M’lady?”

Sonia smiles unto herself, taking a small step forward towards her girlfriend. Her hand closes around the other. Slowly, the drift out onto the dance floor.

“I’ll always dance with you,” Sonia says, a wide smile breaching her face as she begins to laugh.

The pair twirls into the pale darkness. Other couples vanish with them, but the music remains ever-present. And never for a moment does Sonia seem unhappy. She is positively glowing, even despite the darkness. And Chiaki never removes her gaze from Sonia’s.

For the second time in her life, Sonia feels like a true princess. This time was second only to the first dance she shared with her father after she came out publicly. But this is equally as wonderful, if not even more. Her dress glitters under the light; her eyes shutting lightly as she twirls into the darkness. She dances like she was having her first father-daughter dance, and nothing matters more to her in this moment than to enjoy it to the fullest.

Sonia lets out a sigh of relief. Everything is perfect. She is here with the people she loves the most, doing the one thing she loves the most. She is dancing with Chiaki surrounded by dozens of their friends. If anything is perfection, this was it.

They are each other’s family. All of 77-B is, really. But Chiaki is above the rest, for Sonia, and Sonia for Chiaki. They have been there for each other since the beginning—well, truthfully, since they met freshman year, but that’s beside the point—and ever since. They have supported each other along every journey. It’s corny, yes, but it’s true.

Chiaki smiles, “Sonia, you look *beautiful*.”

And for once, Sonia feels it. There isn’t a doubt in her mind that she is, truly, beautiful. Not a single person can stop her from feeling beautiful, not even herself. She keeps dancing to the thought.

CROWD SURF
TOUR
TOUR
TOUR
mikan tsumiki
ibuki mioda
hiyoko saionji

Hope for the Future

Vessel

Towa City-20XX-Pre Retrieval

Nagito wakes to the sound of a child tugging on his pant leg and whining about something- and while it's most definitely not his favorite way to wake up, it's become a commonplace when he lives day to day tending after these five children he's found himself to be the guardian of. One of them is pulling at his leg while he attempts to shake himself from his sleep. A young, brown-haired one, tears streaming down cheeks and hair tousled every-which way. Which is strange, because this artistic young child almost never be seen without the mask that hides their face.

"S-servant? I threw up!" The child cries out, waving the mask around in front of themself.

"Alright. Let's get you cleaned up." Nagito replies. He smiles softly, despite the exhaustion dragging at his eyes, and begins to stand up. His knees and back crack in retaliation of him standing up, and also partially because he has been sleeping on a crappy old mattress for months on end now.

He trudges tiredly to the kitchen of the apartment they've all stayed in the past couple of weeks. They move around from place to place until each resource is dried up. Thankfully the water still works here and Nagito can get a clean shower when the children allow it. He helps the sniffling child up onto the kitchen counter and grabs an old washcloth. Nagito knows, with dreaded certainty, that he'll have to clean up where the child threw up. But he'll hold his grimace for now. He doesn't want the child to think their face needs any covering.

The child sniffles and wipes their face, smearing vomit on their sleeve, "T-thank you..."

Nagito tilts his head as he wipes their mouth gently, he's never really been thanked before for helping them clean up after themselves. It's expected of him. He is their servant, after all.

The kid just shakes their head and sets the mask down on the counter. Seemingly deciding to pout about the fact that Nagito was confused about their thanks. He continues to carefully wipe the child's face in a slightly tense silence, as if the child wanted to say something but couldn't make the words come out.

That's okay though, it doesn't particularly matter much to him. He doesn't like to talk all the time either.

Nagito finishes up the kid's face and ruffles their hair with a smile, "Let's see that mask, hm?"

The kid nods, notably dejected about something as they hand Nagito the mask. Nagito begins to gently clean off the leather, rinsing it clean of sweat and puke. The child just slowly kicks their legs back and forth in the silence, the only thing filling it is the running water and the small sniffles coming from the kid.

"You didn't even notice..." They finally say.

Nagito turns his attention back to the child, noting that they sort of look like if a sopping wet kitten was kicked. Sort of.

"What do you mean?" Nagito furrows his brow and looks the child up and down, from the paint-stained overalls to their soft, angelic face.

"My hair! I cut it!" The kid pulls at their now shoulder-length hair, distressed.

Nagito raises his eyebrows. The kid had their hair tied up in the mask half the time, so it's not like he didn't know they had long hair... he mostly forgot about it. Didn't

pay much attention to a child's hair-length.

He smiles softly and ruffles up the top of their head fondly.

"So you did. You truly are the Lil' Ultimate Art, huh?"

The child shrugs and then looks back down, dejected.

Nagito never tends to ask what's wrong, the children here have lots of things wrong with them but he knows they don't want to talk about it. Just wanna kill the adults that hurt them. He can't help but agree even if they all tell him he's on thin ice for being just-barely an adult.

He finishes up the mask and picks up the kid, taking them back over to their own room. He can clean up the rest of the vomit in the morning.

"Can I," their voice is quiet, just barely cutting through the darkness of the apartment, "Can I sleep in your bed tonight?"

Nagito smiles, "Of course."

He brings the kid to his room, laying down and getting settled back into the bed, the child as well, snuggles up and curls underneath the covers. Nagito listens to the child's breathing, carefully playing with their hair. It wasn't the best haircut he's seen, but he's proud of the kid.

"Hey, Servant?" The child speaks yet again, small voice wavering slightly.

"Mhm?" Nagito shuts his eyes and yawns.

"Do you ever feel like... you weren't meant to be this way?" The child sits up a little, fidgeting with their sleeves.

Nagito sits up, blinking slowly, processing the question.

"Like... I feel like... I was born wrong?" The child

continues, not making eye contact.

Nagito considers this. Considers his scars on his chest. The scars that Kamukura helped him out with. The fact that he's never felt correct- like maybe if he was born in a different body maybe his life wouldn't have been like this. He's wished upon a dozen stars to have his body magical change into how he views himself, but it never did. His eyes go foggy, from tears forming in the corners. He wipes them away.

"Yeah. I have."

"Really?"

"Do you feel like a boy?"

The child considers the question carefully, and sniffles. Trembles and moves closer to Nagito.

"My mom didn't believe-"

Nagito shakes his head.

"How do you feel? Do you feel like a boy?"

The child whimpers and hugs Nagito close. Nagito squeezes him back. Tight. He doesn't want to let go.

"Y-yeah. I feel like I should've been a boy. I feel like I wasn't made right." The child sniffles, "I wish I was made right!"

Nagito allows the child to cry, and wail, and sob, and whatever else the kid needs to do to let it out. He knows what it's like to hold it all in.

He wishes he had someone to hold him like this too, when he realized.

"Listen to me, okay?" Nagito cups the child's face in his hands, wet eyes staring up at his, "You aren't wrong for being this way, some people are made different. You're

perfect."

"Am I? Really?" The child sounds captivated by disbelief through tears.

"Yes, I promise. I know how it feels. And you are perfect."

There's a long silence between them that doesn't seem to end. That seems to stretch on for eternity. He doesn't want to let go.

"Jataro." The child says, after a long while.

"Hm?"

"My name. It's Jataro."

"I like that. It's a good name. Creative name."

And Nagito doesn't want to let go.

——— ⋆·☆·⋆ ———

Jabberwock Island-20XX-Post Program

It's been a good, long couple of months since the program ended and they were all officially freed from the clutches of despair. They're in the throes of summer, the heat buzzing along with the cicadas through the air. It's the point where everyone usually carries around a water bottle with them because it's so hot. Nagito is no exception.

Except for the fact he also has a gaggle of kids following him around, just like in the despair days. And he doesn't mind it, not really. When Kotoko begs him to do a spa day, or when Masaru tries to roughhouse with him, when Monaca gets into one of her funks and won't talk about what's bothering her, even when Nagisa drags him out of his cabin to show him one of his newest science projects. But he has something he desperately wants to talk about with one of the kids.

Jataro has been quieter than usual ever since he and the others got off that ship. Not really speaking much at all. And his mask is off, at the very least, but he wishes the kid would talk more.

Back in Towa, they weren't able to help him with what he needed most of all, and while the other kids were accepting, Nagito wonders if it was enough.

After his chores are done for the day, he has a quiet moment to himself, all the kids off doing their own thing right now. Now all he has to do is find Jataro. Knowing the kid, he's probably holed up either in the hotel lobby or in Nagito's cabin right now. Thankfully it's not a long walk to get to the residential area of the island and he spots Jataro in the hotel lobby pretty easily.

He's making paper cutouts of people, separate cutouts for clothes and such. Right now he's drawing faces on one of the people he hasn't cut out yet.

"Hello Jataro," Nagito maneuvers himself onto the floor with a slight groan, "What are you doing?"

Jataro stays quiet and focused for a long moment, tongue poking out of his mouth as he concentrates on his task, "Makin' paper dolls," he finally hums out.

"How interesting! What are you going to do with them," Nagito eyes the choppy, cut hair that's grown out on Jataro.

"I 'unno. Dress them up or something," Jataro scratches the back of his head.

Nagito sits there with Jataro in silence as he continues on in his task of making little clothes for little paper people. It's hard for him to bring up, because he remembers how the future foundation treated him and the others when they were under the thralls of Junko's despair. He sees how Jataro's hair has grown out, closer to where it was before they started cutting it regularly back in Towa. Nagito was never good at cutting hair, but he'd say he did a pretty alright job before they all got captured. Maybe someone else on the island could do better, but he's pretty sure Jataro wouldn't trust anyone else other than him to cut it right.

He has to say what he's about to say very carefully, because he doesn't want to upset little Jataro. But he has to know. Has to.

"Did the Future Foundation treat you well, when I wasn't there?"

Jataro tilts his head a little, hums a little and kicks his legs while he colors, "I guess. We got good food and nice beds n' stuff," Jataro shrugs.

Nagito frowns and takes a lock of Jataro's hair into his hand, inspecting it closely, "Yes," he sighs, "But were they nice to you Jataro?"

Jataro sets down his colored pencil and makes a strange face, tapping his fingers on the ground.

"They didn't let me cut my hair," he mumbles out, "Or use the right name."

Nagito nods.

"Then let's fix you up, hm?"

Jataro's eyes are bright as he flips around to look at Nagito, "Really?"

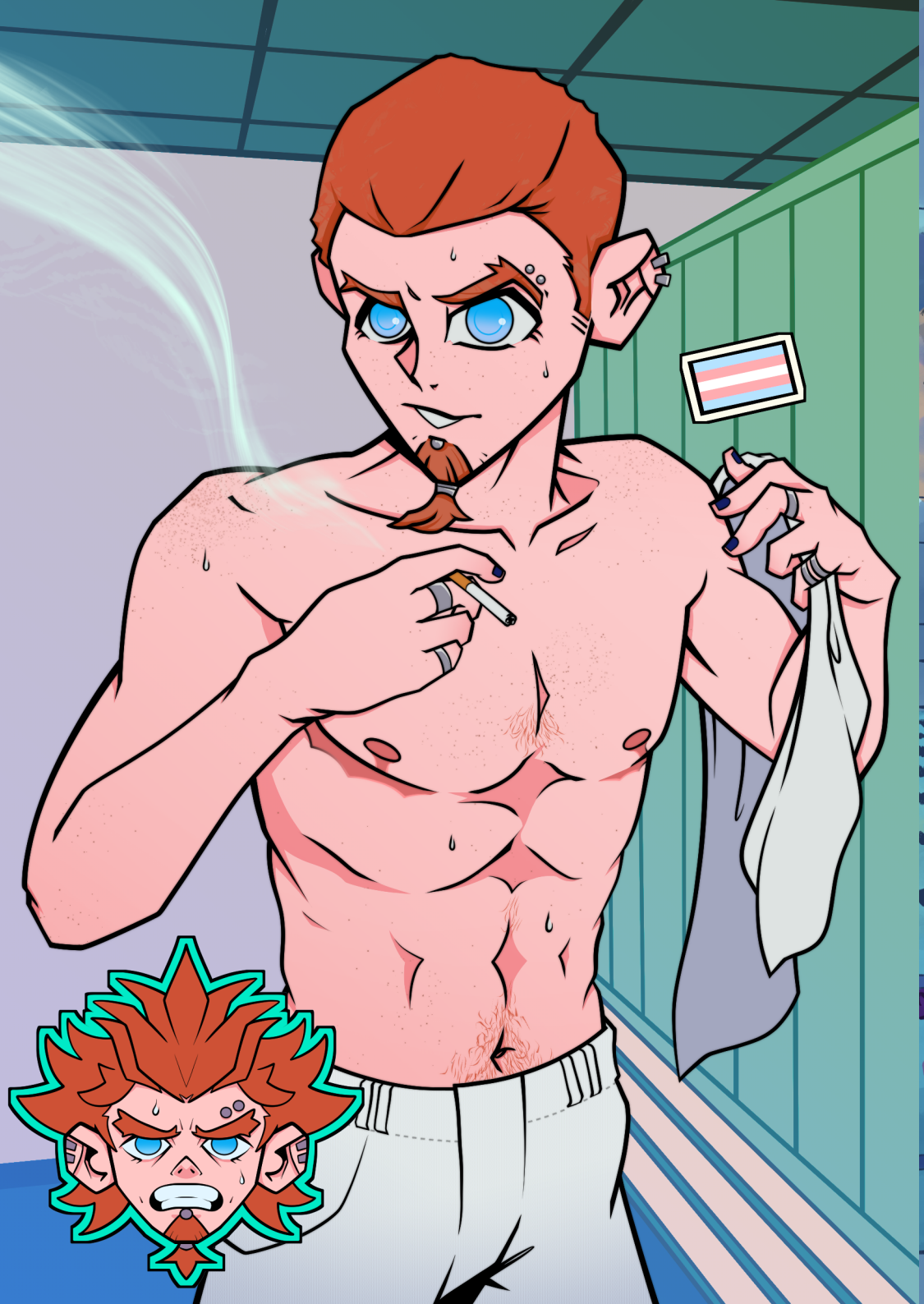
Nagito nods and ruffles Jataro's hair, "Really."

They take up residence in Nagito's bathroom, Jataro squirming excitedly on the chair he's set out as locks of hair slowly fall to the floor of the bathroom and his hair is fixed with care. Jataro laughs when Nagito makes fun of the Future Foundation agents, and is beaming from ear-to-ear when they have Hajime help him change his name in the system. When it's dinner-time, Jataro is smiling, and happy, and finally, finally, himself. And while maybe the world's distorted beyond repair, and maybe the outside world is filled with despair, Nagito can't help but finally feel a pure kind of hope while Jataro squeezes him in a tight hug when the day is done. Because these kids he's raising are hope. Hope to rebuild this broken world he and the others created.

It's hope for the future.

Celebrate!
happy transition

110%



The Only Thing That's Dead is Your Name

glownary

Maki isn't her name yet, but it will be someday.

She's ten years old. She lives in a noisy, crowded home for orphaned children. One of the other children at the orphanage is her "friend." Maki's friend is a "girl."

Maki is a "boy," or so the adults keep telling her. They won't allow her to grow her hair out to be long and beautiful like her friend's is. They won't let her play the "mother" role when she plays house with the other children.

Despite this, she's relatively happy with her lot in life. The younger children love her and look up to her. She softens her voice to read them stories at night, and combs the girls hair with a sense of longing.

Sometimes the older boys insist that the way Maki cares for the younger children is "women's work." The implication both angers and frightens her. Why should the boys not pitch in to care for the little ones? Does her inclination for caretaking give her away? Do they *know*?

Maki's friend always interrupts them, terrorizing the play space and ruining whatever game is going on. The older kids and the adults don't seem to like Maki's friend very much; her friend is punished often, the most frequent flier of the timeout corner. Sometimes the older kids try to bully her friend, even, but she always steps in.

She doesn't completely understand, but sometimes her friend cries at night about how the world is unfair and wrong. Pehaps selfishly, she doesn't think her friend has much reason to feel that way. She would do anything to grow her hair out long and shiny like her friend's; to be allowed to wear skirts and dresses.

Her world would not be unfair if she was allowed to be a girl.

⋆⋅☆⋅⋆

Kokichi isn't his name yet, but it will be someday.

He's ten years old. He lives in a brightly colored prison called an orphanage. One of the other children at the orphanage is his "friend." Kokichi's friend is a "boy."

Kokichi isn't a "girl," but the adults keep insisting that he is. They won't let him cut his hair short and blunt, and they keep hiding the scissors from him. When they ask him to play the "mother" in house, he ruins the game in a fit. Eventually, they stop asking. He's fine with that—there are much better games to play than house, after all.

It becomes obvious very quickly that Kokichi is a problem child. He hates the adults, and the adults pretend not to hate him, but he can tell that they do. Despite this, when the other boys get in trouble, they receive harsher punishments than he does. They don't say it outright, but he picks up the implication—it's because he's a "*girl*." He retaliates by lashing out more, in progressively worse ways, until they have no choice but to treat him the same.

Adults enforce meaningless rules. Adults treat boys and girls differently. If "adoption" means being taken away from the other children by strange adults, then Kokichi wants no part in it. Luckily, his disobedience wards off any prospective parents from choosing him.

Kokichi's friend is well-loved by the younger children, helpful, and relatively obedient. Because of this, his friend is also liked by the adults. This friend is showered in praise, and trusted with more responsibilities than the other kids. Kokichi thinks that responsibility given freely by the adults is not responsibility he would like to have; that there is a world of difference between being trusted as a leader and being trusted as a minion to force tasks others don't want onto.

Kokichi resents his friend, just a little bit.

——— ⋆·☆·⋆ ———

In many ways, Maki's childhood ends the day that the Holy Salvation Society takes her away from the orphanage.

The strange men consider taking her friend first. Her friend has "potential," they say; and surely, the orphanage won't miss having such a problem child around. If anything, the workers seem eager to pawn her friend off over the other children.

Fear strikes her heart like a premonition. *Whatever they want can't be good. If my friend is taken, we'll never see each other again.*

And so she offers herself in her friend's place—a sacrifice she can't possibly understand the extent of until it's already too late.

From the very first moment she arrives at their facility, all meager pretenses of taking her "home" are dropped. The facility is large and sterile, almost medical-feeling. There are no loving parents waiting to welcome her with open arms, only more adults with cold demeanors and tailored suits. Instead of siblings she is greeted with the pallid, sunken expressions of dozens of other orphans from around the country. She quickly learns that no two children are from the same orphanage—less risk of *attachment* to each other.

All day every day, the children are trained in combat. She's taught hand to hand, how to handle weaponry, and even the art of improvising weapons out of regular household objects and office supplies. At night when she goes to bed, the world is too quiet. She never thought that she would miss the frustrations of the orphanage; the incessant noise, the overcrowding, and the cries. Possibly the worst thing about the other children is the lack of crying—no one cries for longer than their first two weeks. They just don't have the energy or will to care beyond that point.

You don't know how good you have it until it's gone.

The only silver lining is her shocking newfound "freedom" of expression. When she recoils and trembles at the adults' attempts to cut her hair as it grows out, they give her plastic, placid smiles.

"Don't you think all this hair will get in the way of your work?" they ask her. She shakes her head so hard she almost gives herself whiplash. It's barely shoulder length, now, but she can't bear to part with it. "I see. You know, you've been pretty good for us lately." Fingers run through her hair, and she resists the urge to flinch. "I think that long hair is impractical, but... if you really want to keep it, why don't you prove that it won't impede on your efficiency?"

Maki stares back at the worker blankly. "How?"

"Your first mission is coming up soon. Do a good job and you can keep your hair as long as you'd like."

It seems almost too good to be true. Still, she scrambles at the opportunity. "Okay," she says, her eyes wide and her hands stroking the strands for comfort. "Okay."

She knows, of course, what they're asking her to do. She knows what they're preparing her for. Is her survival worth the ending of a stranger's life? Is it worth it to give her all—to treat murder like an exam she needs to ace—in order to obtain her reward?

There is no other answer here, no chance to consider doing anything less than her best. She loses her friends, her youth, and her innocence in the process of becoming an assassin—but she also finds herself, if only a little bit.

——— ⋆·☆·⋆ ———

Kokichi chops his hair off the night he runs away.

The kids at the orphanage don't get adopted very often. His friend is taken away by strange men in suits, and the adults at the orphanage call it an "adoption," but it doesn't seem like one. They speak with the plain, overly serious tone of businessmen, not the excitement of soon-to-be parents. Kokichi doesn't trust them in the slightest.

Life is cruel and children are near powerless in their fates. More than anything, Kokichi *needs* to take his fate into his own hands—he will not be taken away like his friend was.

And so—one month later—he sneaks out with a backpack full of clothes, a mere 2000 yen in one pocket and a stolen pair of scissors in the other, and hits the road. He has little care for the law, but he knows that there's a time and place for everything; he needs to avoid trespassing lest the police take notice of his presence. He walks around like he knows exactly what he's doing and where he's going. If anyone asked, he would simply lie and say that he's going home.

He cuts his hair short and messy in a gas station bathroom, accidentally scratching his cheek in the process. A tiny amount of blood drips down from the miniscule wound. He had the foresight, at least, to shove a couple of basic first aid supplies in his bag—he wipes at the cut with toilet paper before covering it with a bandaid. It reminds him of how his friend used to bandage his wounds for him. After staring at himself in the mirror for a little while, turning his head to check every angle, he washes the loose strands down the drain and leaves.

Kokichi grins a little at every reflective surface he passes for the rest of the night, despite his aimless journey. He knows it won't be easy, but even as a child he would rather struggle in freedom than suffer “captivity.”

He left all skirts and dresses behind. His hair is short, choppy, and masculine. The world is his.

——— ⋆·☆·⋆ ———

Memories will always eventually warp and change. Over time, Maki has forgotten much of Kokichi’s rage and destructive tendencies, leaving behind only the length of his hair and the tears in his eyes those late nights when he thought she was asleep. Kokichi remembers the orphanage only as his prison—and Maki, his fellow inmate.

Maybe it was inevitable that they would clash horribly upon becoming classmates at Hope's Peak Academy. Kokichi is an incessant annoyance, a smug asshole who knows things he shouldn't. Maki is a cold, off-putting, and violent person—and a *liar*.

“Y'know, for a caregiver, I haven't seen much care given by you,” Kokichi tells her. “Are you suuuure that's your talent? Maybe we should ask the principal to double check.”

Maki's eyebrow twitches. He just can't leave her alone, it seems, and she can't help but be riled up by him. "Yes. I'm sure."

"Hmmm... I dunno. I just can't see it!"

"Then look away."

Kokichi taps his chin for a second in mock thought, then shakes his head. "Nah, don't feel like it."

Maki lets out a hiss through her teeth, cursing the fact that she got stuck on classroom cleaning duty with him of all people. "What do you even want from me? Other than to piss me off."

His gaze sharpens at the question. "Nothing much. Just wondering when the last time you actually cared for a child was."

Her eyes narrow in return, buttons thoroughly pushed. It wasn't difficult to when the topic of her talent came up. "I don't see how that's any of your business, but I always help out when I visit the orphanage I'm from."

"Oh, yeah? You visit often, then?"

She rolls her eyes and returns to wiping down the chalkboard. "Yes. At least once a week. Why do you even—"

"No, you don't."

Maki's arm stills against the blackboard mid swipe. "*Excuse me?*"

Kokichi's expression has gone blank, unreadable. "You don't. You haven't been there in a long time now."

He's gotten bolder, she thinks, but no less infuriating. Her knuckles go white as she grips the rag tightly, resisting the bubbling urge to sock him with it. "What the hell would you know? You don't know a goddamn thing about me."

"I know that you're not the Ultimate Child Caregiver."

Her blood goes cold in her veins. He's right. But he can't know that.

"You don't know *anything*," she reiterates.

"So, what is it really? Ultimate Mercenary?"

"Stop."

"Assassin, maybe?"

"*Stop*." Without even a moment of thought, her instincts kick in and she has him by the throat. She realizes, a second too late, that this reaction isn't helping her case. His eyes are wide, unflinching. She hates looking into them. "How—*why*—"

"I can't fucking stand it," he chokes out. "Lying about who you are. And I know you can't, either. Or else—you wouldn't have transitioned."

Her hand goes slack at the same time as her jaw. She looks at him, *really* looks at him for what feels like the first time. She traces each and every feature over and over in her mind until she recognizes her friend in him.

"I knew right away," he says, shaking her hand off. "The mole by your eye is in the same spot. And, of course, there's your name. Interesting choice."

"They told me you were dead," is all she can manage to say. She used to beg her superiors to allow her to visit the orphanage, or at the very least give her updates on the other children. Once they had told her that her friend died, she stopped asking. Decided it was better not to know.

He simply shrugs in response. “I thought you might've been, too, until I saw you here. Congratulations on not biting the dust yet.”

Maki's brow furrows. This might be her childhood friend, but he's still *Kokichi*. “If you knew it was me, why didn't you say anything?”

“Figured I'd see if you recognized me too, at first. And then, when I started to realize the truth about your talent, I wasn't sure if I wanted to.”

“Of course.” She huffs. “Then what *do* you want from me to make you bring it up now?”

“The truth.” His gaze is intense, his lips drawn into a flat line. “The others don't need to know that you're trans—you're a girl, and they know you as one. You don't have to tell them anything more about it if you don't want to. But you *do* have to tell them the truth about your talent.”

“You can't be serious.”

“I am. And you'd better tell them in your own words soon if you don't want me to do it for you.”

Clenching her teeth and unclenching her fist, Maki suddenly regrets letting Kokichi out of her chokehold. “You're more of an ass than I remembered.”

“Eh. Puberty'll do that to you.” He slinks out of arm's reach before she can change her mind about the choking. “You're friends with Kaito and Shuuichi, aren't you? Start with them. You can't hide it forever.”

“I was planning on it.”

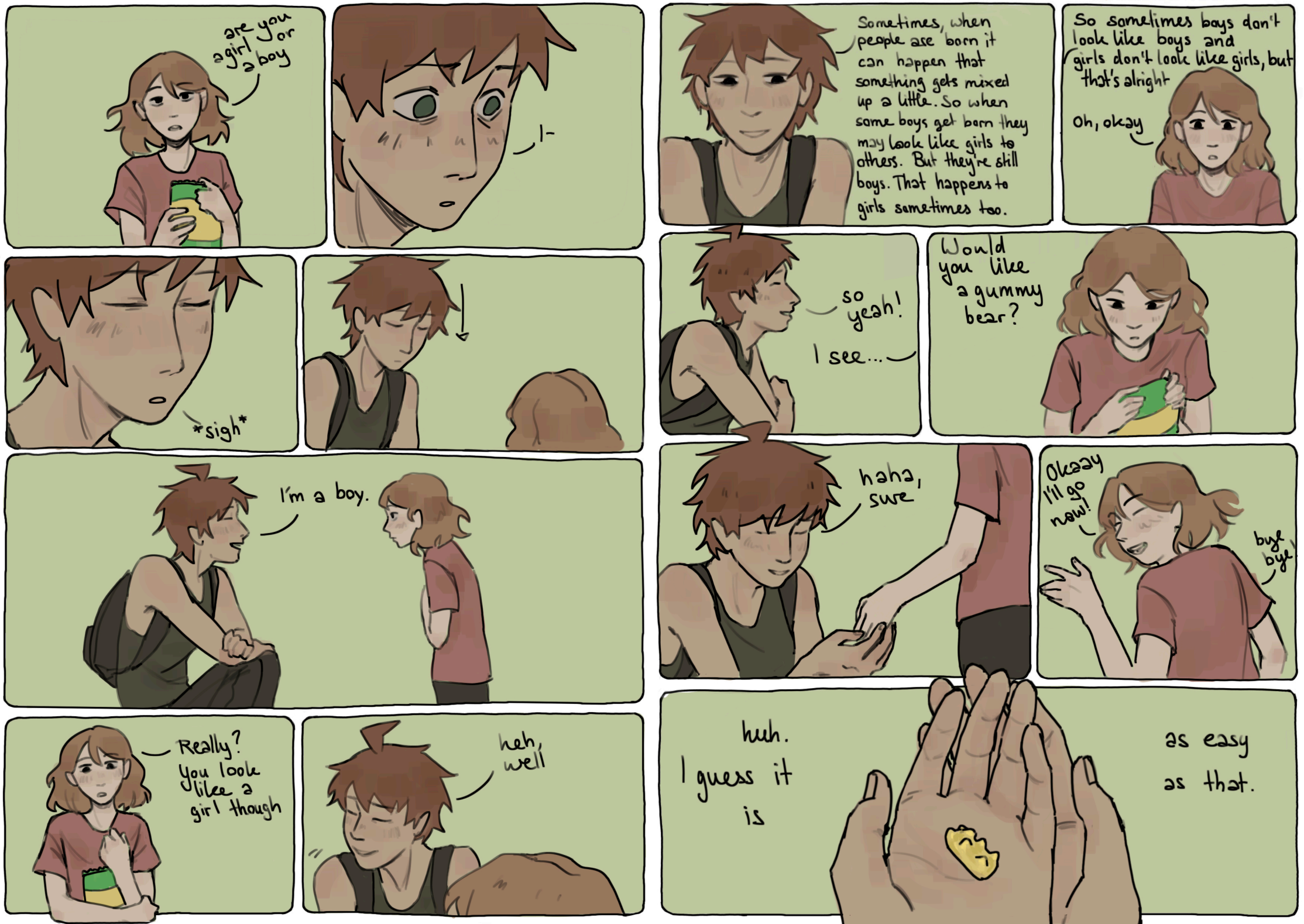
“Too bad.” Kokichi pauses on his way out of the room with one hand resting against the doorframe. He doesn't look back at her. “I don't mind,” he says. “Your name, that is. Not like I'm using it anyways. And... it suits you better than it ever did me.”

“...Thanks.” She stares harshly at the floor. “Yours suits you too, I guess. Has an annoying ring to it.”

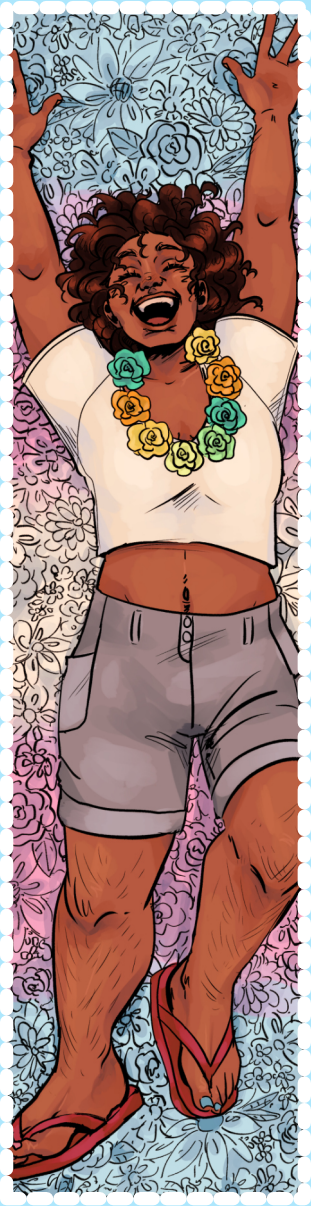
She can still hear him roaring with laughter as he turns down the hall.

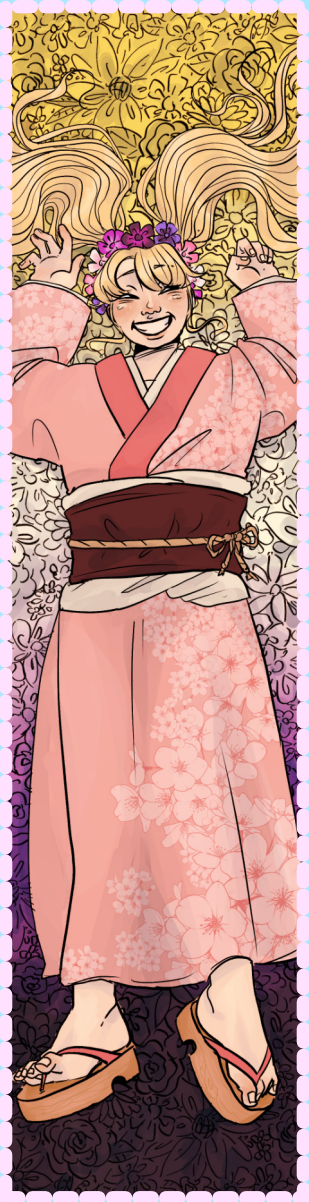
HE/
HIM

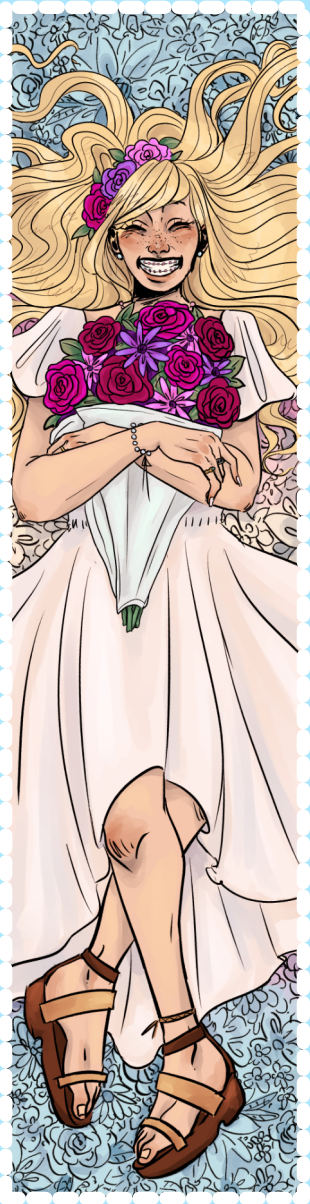
!!
Hey, excuse me?
Are you a girl or a boy?
I- er
I'm a girl.
Oh, okay
= ONE YEAR LATER =
uhh hey?
can I ask you something?
yeah, of course


are you a girl or a boy
!-
sigh
!
I'm a boy.
Really? You look like a girl though
heh, well
Sometimes, when people are born it can happen that something gets mixed up a little. So when some boys get born they may look like girls to others. But they're still boys. That happens to girls sometimes too.
So sometimes boys don't look like boys and girls don't look like girls, but that's alright
Oh, okay
so yeah!
I see...
Would you like a gummy bear?
haha, sure
Okaay I'll go now!
bye bye
huh. I guess it is
as easy as that.

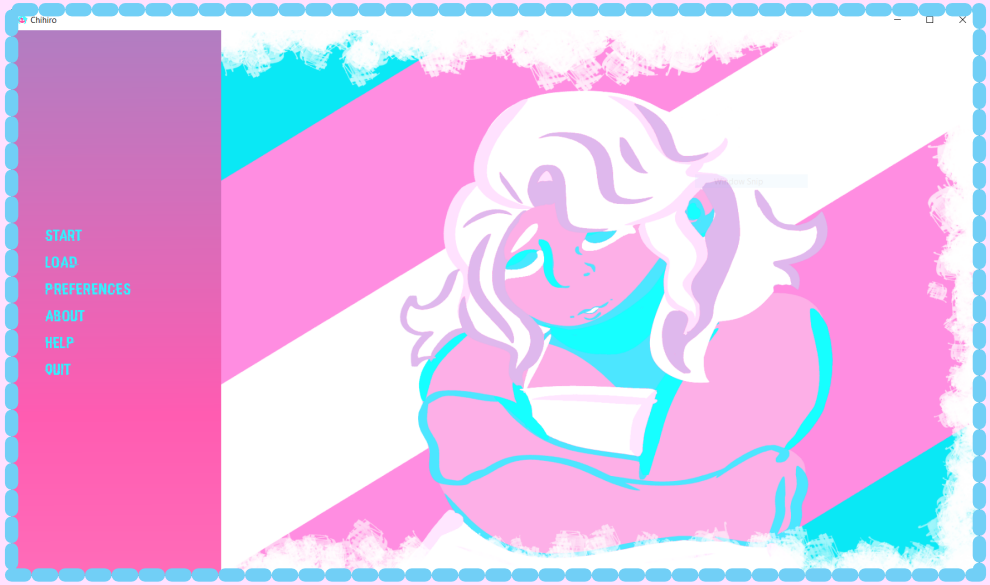
Bookmarks: Jesse

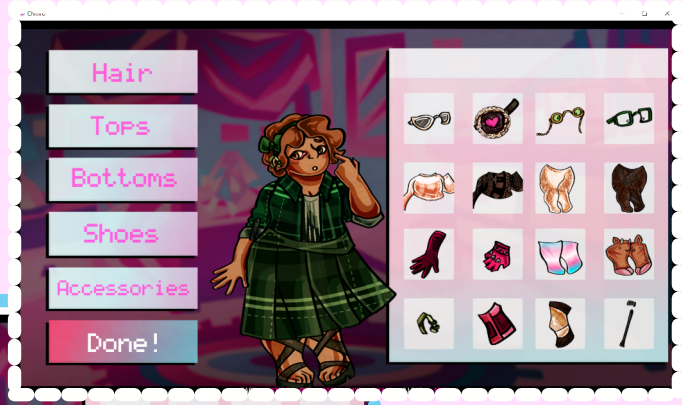




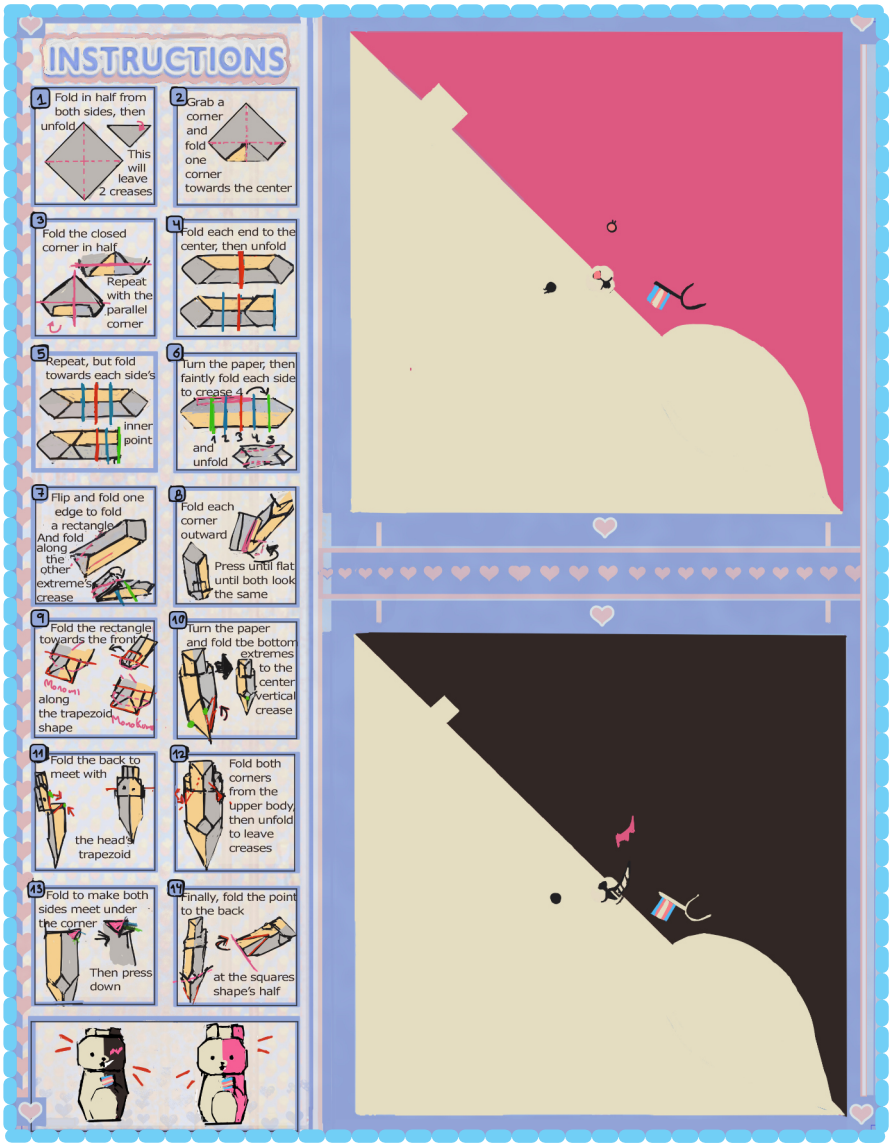


Dress-Up Game: Harper





Simple dress-up game for PC and Mac!



Bottom Right: K; Top Right: Atti; Above: Liam

Left: Izzy; Top: Kay;
Right: Hypnos;
Bottom: Chacha

Wallpaper: Kippy

We can't thank you all for supporting this project! It was a passion project for all of us here. We hope you adored each page of this zine crafted loving for you all to see! Thank you for helping a group of trans people and allies.

And remember Trans Rights are Human Rights!